

Senate Bill 33

By: Senators Moody of the 56th, Douglas of the 17th, Balfour of the 9th, Hooks of the 14th, Bulloch of the 11th and others

AS PASSED

AN ACT

To amend Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to change certain provisions relating to determination of enrollment by institutional programs; to authorize the establishment of the Georgia Virtual School; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for a Georgia Virtual School grant account; to provide for statutory construction; to provide for related matters; to provide an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the "Quality Basic Education Act," is amended by striking subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-160, relating to determination of enrollment by institutional programs, and inserting in its place a new subsection (a) to read as follows:

"(a) The State Board of Education shall designate the specific dates upon which two counts of students enrolled in each instructional program authorized under this article shall be made each school year and by which the counts shall be reported to the Department of Education. The initial enrollment count shall be made after October 1 but prior to November 17 and the final enrollment count after March 1 but prior to May 1. The report shall indicate the student's specific assigned program for each one-sixth segment of the school day on the designated reporting date. No program shall be indicated for a student for any one-sixth segment of the school day that the student is assigned to a study hall; a noncredit course; a course recognized under this article or by state board policy as an enrichment course, except a driver education course; a course which requires participation in an extracurricular activity for which enrollment is on a competitive basis; a course in which the student serves as a student assistant to a teacher, in a school office, or in the media center, except when such placement is an approved work site of a recognized career or vocational program; an individual study course for which no outline of course objectives is prepared in writing prior to the beginning of the course; a course taken through the

Georgia Virtual School pursuant to Code Section 20-2-319; or any other course or activity so designated by the state board. For the purpose of this Code section, the term 'enrichment course' means a course which does not dedicate a major portion of the class time toward the development and enhancement of one or more student competencies as adopted by the state board under Code Section 20-2-140. A program shall not be indicated for a student for any one-sixth segment of the school day for which the student is not enrolled in an instructional program or has not attended a class or classes within the preceding ten days; nor shall a program be indicated for a student for any one-sixth segment of the school day for which the student is charged tuition or fees or is required to provide materials or equipment beyond those authorized pursuant to Code Section 20-2-133. A student who is enrolled in an eligible institution under the program established in Code Section 20-2-161.1 may be counted for the high school program for only that portion of the day that the student is attending the high school for those segments that are eligible to be counted under this subsection. The state board shall adopt such regulations and criteria as necessary to ensure objective and true counts of students in state approved instructional programs. The state board shall also establish criteria by which students shall be counted as resident or nonresident students, including specific circumstances which may include, but not be limited to, students attending another local school system under court order or under the terms of a contract between two local school systems. If a local school system has a justifiable reason, it may seek authority from the state board to shift full-time equivalent program counts from the designated date to a requested alternate date."

SECTION 2.

Said article is further amended in Part 14, relating to other educational programs under the "Quality Basic Education Act," by inserting at the end thereof a new Code Section 20-2-319 to read as follows:

"20-2-319.

(a) The State Board of Education is authorized to establish the Georgia Virtual School whereby students may enroll in state funded courses via the Internet or in any other manner not involving on-site interaction with a teacher. Any Georgia student who is age 21 or younger shall be eligible to enroll in the Georgia Virtual School, at no cost to the student, provided that public school students shall be given priority. The State Board of Education is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations pertaining to the Georgia Virtual School. Such rules and regulations, if established, shall include, at a minimum, a process for students to enroll in Georgia Virtual School courses, including provisions allowing for

students to participate in such courses in excess of any maximum number of courses allowed per year at a tuition rate to be established by the State Board of Education, and a process whereby a student's grade in the course is reported on the student's transcript. All teachers who provide instruction through the Georgia Virtual School shall be certified by the Professional Standards Commission.

(b) The department is authorized to establish a Georgia Virtual School grant account with funds appropriated by the General Assembly. The amount of funds requested by the state board for this account shall be the amount that the participating students would have earned under this article if those students had been in equivalent general education programs in a local school system for that portion of the instructional day in which the students were actually enrolled in a Georgia Virtual School course. The department shall use funds from this grant account to pay for costs associated with the Georgia Virtual School incurred by the department, including, but not limited to, actual costs of tuition, materials, and fees directly related to the approved courses taken by the students through the Georgia Virtual School.

(c) The Georgia Virtual School shall not be considered a school for purposes of Article 2 of Chapter 14 of this title."

SECTION 3.

This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

SECTION 4.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.